

Benton-Franklin Counties COVID-19 Outbreak Report

March 2021

The data in this report were collected from March 2020 through February 28, 2021.

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Summary

Benton-Franklin Health District (BFHD) conducts case interviews with people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and investigates outbreaks in Benton and Franklin counties. COVID-19 cases are identified by a positive PCR or antigen test. The information contained in this report is an overview of COVID-19 outbreaks that have been investigated by the BFHD Outbreak Mitigation teams and reported to the Washington State Department of Health via the Washington State Disease Reporting System (WDRS). During an outbreak investigation, team members advise and educate businesses, schools, long-term care facilities and other healthcare settings about appropriate guidance and strategies for disease prevention and control measures in their specific situations.

The data in this report is reflective of information known at this time, however since investigations are constant and ongoing along with the dynamic nature of COVID-19 disease surveillance there may be delays in reporting as data is continually being updated. The graphs below have been computed from data in WDRS including symptom onset and outbreak report dates.

Since the start of the pandemic, there has been 443 total outbreaks investigated by BFHD with over 3999 cases associated with these outbreaks. With the current case counts for Benton-Franklin counties over 25600, cases linked to outbreaks account for approximately 16% of reported cases. It is important to note that there are limitations to the data for several reasons. For example, not all businesses or facilities report cases to BFHD or they may not report all staff consistently. They also may not be aware of all cases associated with their facility since they typically would not know if visitors or customers become ill. In addition, during case interviews not all people will report their employer, visiting a specific business or being associated with a particular facility or setting.

Washington State Department of Health (DOH) separates healthcare settings from non-healthcare settings for reporting and investigating purposes due to the unique infection prevention considerations in a healthcare setting.

In this report, non-healthcare settings include congregate settings where COVID-19 outbreaks can occur such as agricultural settings, food processing facilities, restaurants, correctional facilities, schools, childcares and community events.

Healthcare settings consist of long-term care facilities, hospitals, outpatient settings (medical/dental clinics, etc.), behavioral health facilities, supported living settings, home healthcare, dialysis centers or independent senior living facilities. Long-term care facilities (LTCF's) include skilled nursing facilities or nursing homes, assisted living facilities and adult family homes.

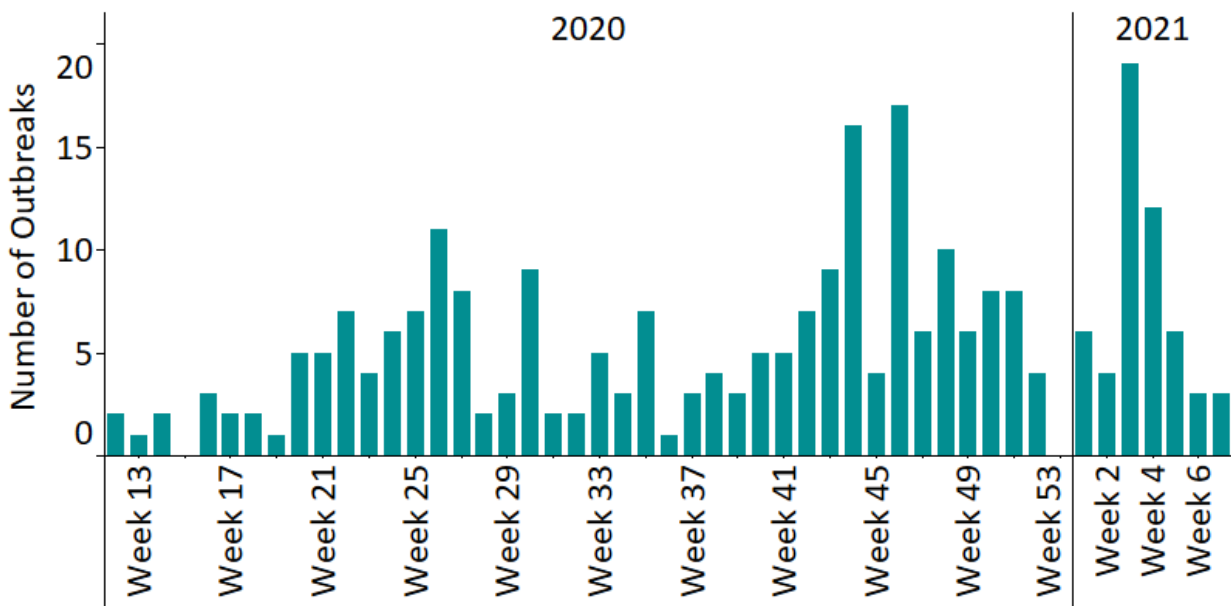
COVID-19 Outbreaks in Non-Healthcare Congregate Settings

According to the document [Public Health COVID-19 Guidance: Non-Healthcare Workplaces in Washington State](#), an outbreak in a non-healthcare congregate setting is defined by:

1. Two or more laboratory positive (PCR or antigen) COVID-19 cases, AND
2. At least two of the cases have symptom onset dates within 14 days of each other, AND
3. Plausible epidemiological evidence of transmission in a shared location other than a household is observed; and
4. In addition to the above criteria, in K-12 school settings, the following items should also be considered according to the document [K-12 Schools 2020-2021 Guidance](#):
 - a. The cases do not share a household.
 - b. The cases are not identified as close contacts of each other in another setting.

Since the start of the pandemic, BFHD has reported a total of 271 non-healthcare associated COVID-19 outbreaks. The graph below shows the number of non-healthcare outbreaks over time by week of approximate symptom onset date of the first reported case.

Non Healthcare Outbreaks by Approximate Week Number of First Symptom Onset



The table below includes all COVID-19 outbreaks reported by setting. Of the 271 non-healthcare congregate outbreaks that BFHD has investigated, 152 occurred in the service-providing industry. On average, 11 cases were identified per outbreak. The number of cases associated with each outbreak

ranged from 2 to 303. The top three categories of non-healthcare congregate setting outbreaks identified are: Agriculture/employer housing/produce packing, Food service/restaurant and Retail.

Washington State DOH recently provided updated guidance on categorization of K-12 school associated outbreaks. Outbreaks will only be categorized as K-12 if it occurs on a school campus with potential for transmission to students or on-site school staff. This change will help to better evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on in-person learning. School associated outbreaks that do not have the potential for transmission to students or on-site school staff such as school district administration offices, transportation offices, bus barns, district mechanic shops etc. should be excluded from the K-12 category. Due to this new guidance, there are four outbreaks that were previously reported by BFHD as K-12 school that have been re-categorized to 'other' in the service-providing category.

Currently, eight out of the 11 reported outbreaks classified in the "K-12 schools" category did not include students.

Number of non-healthcare congregate settings COVID-19 outbreaks reported by setting, ever reported and reported during the most recent month

SITE CATEGORY	OUTBREAK SETTING DESCRIPTION	REPORTED IN FEBRUARY	EVER REPORTED
SERVICE-PROVIDING INDUSTRY	Food service/restaurant	2	35
	Retail	1	25
	Other	2	19
	Professional services/office-based (business, IT, finance, legal)	2	14
	K-12 school	1	11
	Grocery	1	10
	Transportation/shipping/delivery	2	10
	Childcare	1	7
	Utilities	0	5
	Warehousing	0	5
	Facility/domestic cleaning service	0	2
	Hotel	0	2
	Shelter/homeless service	0	2
	Childcare/pre-k	1	1
	Bar/nightclub	0	1
	College/university	0	1
	Leisure/hospitality/recreation	0	1
	Personal care and service (hair, nails)	0	1
GOVERNMENT	Agency, facility, etc.	1	19
	Corrections	0	6
	Public safety	0	1
GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRY	Agriculture/employer housing/produce packing	2	41

	Construction	3	17
	Manufacturing (food and food-related)	1	15
	Manufacturing (non-food)	1	10
COMMUNITY, OTHER	Congregate housing (not employer provided)	0	3
	Place of worship	0	2
	Private event	0	2
	College housing	0	1
	Large gathering	0	1
	Other	0	1
TOTAL		21	271

COVID-19 Outbreaks in Long-Term Care Facilities.

The Washington State Department of Health has set the definition of an outbreak in a long-term care setting as outlined in the [DOH Interim COVID-19 Outbreak Definition for Healthcare Settings](#).

At the end of December 2020, DOH updated the definition of an outbreak in long-term care setting to better capture potential transmission in the facility. As of January 1, 2021, it is currently defined as:

1. One or more long-term care facilities and agencies-acquired COVID-19 infection in a resident OR
2. Two or more COVID-19 infection in healthcare workers who were on-site in the long-term care facility or agency at any time during their infectious period OR during their exposure period and has no other known or more likely exposure source.

Since the start of the pandemic, BFHD has reported a total of **96** long-term care facility (LTCF) COVID-19 outbreaks. An LTCF setting includes skilled-nursing facilities or nursing homes, assisted living facilities and adult family homes. Outbreaks may include residents as well as staff and visitors.

Not all cases were exposed at an LTCF, however, individuals were present in the facility during some point in their exposure period. Many cases may have visited multiple places during their exposure period and some may have visited an LTCF after disease onset.

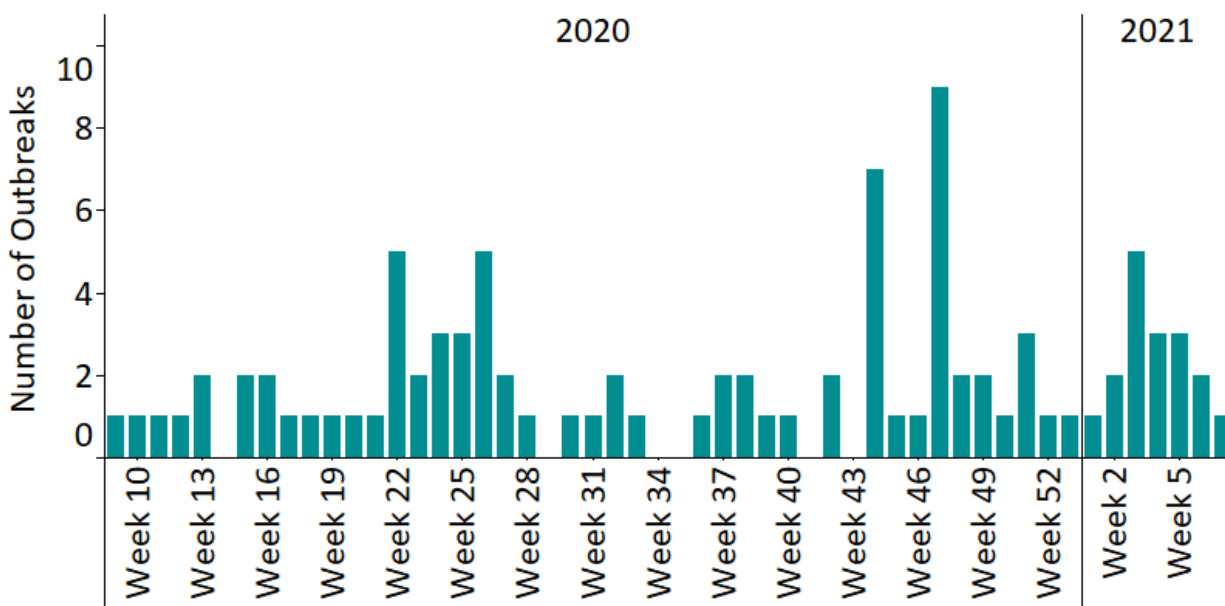
Long term care facilities often have multiple levels of care within the same building and for reporting purposes these facilities have been assigned to the highest level of care. For example, if a facility has both an assisted and independent license, an outbreak associated with their facility would be assigned to the assisted living category in WDRS.

Total LTC cases for residents and staff in Benton-Franklin counties: 823

A total of 823 COVID-19 cases (under 3% of current total cases) have been identified as associated with a LTCF as compared to the current statewide data that 5% of total cases in Washington State are associated with a LTCF as reported in the [DOH COVID-19 Long-term Care Report](#) from 2-9-21.

The graph below shows the number of LTCF outbreaks over time by week of the approximate symptom onset date of the first reported case.

LTCF Outbreaks by Approximate Week Number of First Symptom Onset



COVID-19 Outbreaks in Non-Long-Term Care (Non-LTC) Healthcare Settings.

As referenced above, [DOH Interim COVID-19 Outbreak Definition for Healthcare Settings](#) also contains the current definition of an outbreak in a *residential* healthcare setting such as residential treatment centers or supported living settings. Similar to long-term care facilities, this outbreak definition has also been updated as of January 1, 2021 to better capture potential transmission in the facility.

1. One or more long-term care facilities and agencies-acquired COVID-19 infection in a resident OR
2. Two or more COVID-19 infection in healthcare workers who were on-site in the long term care facility or agency at any time during their infectious period OR during their exposure period and has no other known or more likely exposure source.

BFHD has reported 18 outbreaks in supportive living settings since the beginning of the pandemic. Supportive living refers to a range of services and community living arrangements designed for individuals with disabilities.

The same document [DOH Interim COVID-19 Outbreak Definition for Healthcare Settings](#) also contains the definition of an outbreak in an *inpatient* hospital setting and an *outpatient* healthcare setting such as a medical or dental clinic. These outbreak definitions also have been updated as of January 1, 2021 to better capture potential transmission in the facility.

An outbreak in an *inpatient* hospital setting is defined as meeting one of the following criteria:

1. Two or more cases of COVID-19 infection in a patient seven or more days after admission for a non-COVID condition, with epi-linkage.
 2. Three or more cases of COVID-19 infection in healthcare workers with epi-linkage, AND no other more likely sources of exposure (who do not share a household, and are not listed as a close contact of each other outside of the workplace during standard case investigation or contact tracing) for at least two of the cases.
- OR
- A combination of three or more cases of COVID-19 infection in healthcare workers and patients with epi-linkage.

An outbreak in an *outpatient* healthcare setting is currently defined as:

1. Three or more cases of COVID-19 infection cases in patients or healthcare workers, with epi-linkage, AND no other more likely sources of exposure (who do not share a household, and are not listed as a close contact of each other outside of the workplace during standard case investigation or contact tracing) for at least two of the cases.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, a total of 76 non-LTC healthcare-associated COVID-19 outbreaks have been reported by BFHD in settings including hospitals, home healthcare, independent senior living facilities and other outpatient medical or dental settings. These outbreaks may include staff and patients, residents, clients or visitors. DOH includes senior living in the healthcare category because these apartment-like settings are often co-located with long-term care facilities.

The figure below shows the number of non-LTC healthcare outbreaks over time by week of approximate symptom onset date of the first reported case.

